

CLAIMS

- 1 1. A method for scheduling the distribution of content utilizing a network,
2 comprising the steps of:
 - 3 (a) accessing content in a database;
 - 4 (b) generating schedule data by inputting preferences to a scheduling
5 algorithm , the scheduling algorithm being based on predetermined methods of
6 processing input preferences relating to parameters selected from the group
7 consisting of: frequency, interval, time of play, trigger events, and category filtering;
8 and
 - 9 (c) distributing the content and the schedule data to a plurality of output
10 devices utilizing a network.
- 1 2. A method as recited in claim 1, and further comprising the step of causing the
2 output devices to communicate the content to an audience.
- 1 3. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the content communication is by way
2 of a visual display.
- 1 4. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the content communication is by way
2 of electronic broadcast.
- 1 5. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the content communication is by way
2 of audio/visual broadcast.
- 1 6. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the content communication is by way
2 of audio/visual display.
- 1 7. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the input frequency preference relates
2 to a relative weight associated with each content, and wherein the processing of
3 input preferences includes:
 - 4 assigning a weight to the schedule data associated with each content,
 - 5 Whereby in response to the schedule data, the output devices communicate the
6 content preferentially according to the assigned weight.

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1 8. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the input interval preference relates to
2 a recurring period associated with a play of the content and wherein the processing
3 of input preferences includes:

4 assigning a recurring period to the schedule data associated with each
5 content, whereby in response to the schedule data the output devices cause the
6 content to be communicated at the beginning of the recurring period.

1 9. A method as recited in claim 8, wherein the input preference relating to the
2 interval includes an offset which delays communication of the content following the
3 beginning of the recurring period.

10. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the input time of play preference
relates to a time of day, and wherein the processing of input preferences includes:
assigning a particular time of day to the schedule data associated with each
content, whereby in response to the schedule data, the output devices cause the
content to be communicated at the particular time of day.

11. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the trigger events preference relates
to the occurrence of an event external to the algorithm, wherein the processing of
input preferences includes:
assigning an external event to be recognized to the schedule data associated
with the content, whereby under control of the schedule data, the output devices
communicate the content upon occurrence of the external event.

12. A method as recited in claim 11, wherein the event to be recognized includes
an asynchronous request.

13. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the content includes a tag associated
therewith, the tag indicating whether or not the content is available for
communication.

14. A method as recited in claim 13 wherein the tag indicates whether or not the
content is available for communication to an audience in a specified venue.

- 1 15. A method as recited in claim 13 wherein the tag indicates whether or not the
2 content is available for communication to a particular audience during a specified
3 period of time.
- 1 16. An apparatus for scheduling the distribution of content to a plurality of output
2 devices utilizing a network, comprising:
3 (a) means for accessing content in a database;
4 (b) means for generating schedule data in response to the input of
5 preferences to a scheduling algorithm, the scheduling algorithm being based on
6 predetermined methods of processing input preferences relating to parameters
7 selected from the group consisting of frequency, interval, time of play, trigger events,
8 and category filtering; and
9 (c) means for distributing the content and the schedule data to a plurality
10 of output devices utilizing a network.
- 1 17. An apparatus as recited in claim 16, and further comprising:
2 a plurality of output devices; and
3 means for causing each output device to communicate the content to an
4 audience.
- 1 18. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein at least some of said output
2 devices are visual display devices and the content communication is by way of visual
3 display.
- 1 19. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein at least some of said output
2 devices are electronic transmitters and the content communication is by way of
3 electronic broadcast.
- 1 20. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein at least some of said output
2 devices are transmitters and the content communication is by way of audio/visual
3 broadcast.

1 21. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, at least some of said output devices are
2 display devices and wherein the content communication is by way of audio/visual
3 display.

1 22. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the input frequency preference
2 relates to a weight associated with each content and wherein the processing of input
3 preferences includes:

4 assigning a weight to the schedule data associated with the content, wherein
5 in response to the schedule data the output devices communicate the content
6 preferentially according to the assigned weight.

1 23. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the input interval preference
2 relates to a recurring period associated with a particular content, and wherein the
3 processing of input preferences includes:

4 assigning the recurring period to the schedule data associated with the
5 particular content, whereby in response to the schedule data the output devices
6 cause the content to be communicated at the beginning of the recurring period.

1 24. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the input preferences relating to
2 the interval include an offset which delays communication of the content following
3 the beginning of the recurring period.

1 25. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the input time of play preference
2 relates to a time of day, and wherein the processing of input preferences includes:

3 assigning a particular time of day to the schedule data associated with the
4 content, whereby in response to the schedule data, the output devices cause the
5 content to be communicated at the particular time of day.

1 26. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the trigger events preference
2 relates to the occurrence of an event external to the algorithm, and wherein the
3 processing of input preferences includes:

4 assigning an external event to be recognized to the schedule data associated
5 with the content, whereby under control of the schedule data, the output devices
6 communicate the content upon occurrence of the external event.

- 1 27. An apparatus as recited in claim 26, wherein the external event to be
2 recognized includes an asynchronous request.
- 1 28. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the content includes a tag
2 associated therewith, the tag indicating whether or not the content is available for
3 communication.
- 1 29. An apparatus as recited in claim 28, wherein the tag indicates whether or not
2 the content is available for communication to an audience in a specified venue.
- 1 30. An apparatus as recited in claim 28, wherein the tag indicates whether or not
2 the content is available for communication to an audience during a specified period
3 of time.
- 1 31. A computer program embodied on a computer readable medium for
2 scheduling the distribution of content to a plurality of output devices utilizing a
3 network, comprising:
4 (a) a code segment that accesses content in a database;
5 (b) a code segment including a scheduling algorithm that generates
6 schedule data in response to input preferences, the scheduling algorithm being
7 based on predetermined methods of processing input preferences relating to
8 parameters selected from the group consisting of: frequency, interval, time of play,
9 trigger events, and category filtering; and
10 (c) a code segment that causes distribution of the content and the
11 schedule data to a plurality of output devices utilizing a network.
- 1 32. A computer program as recited in claim 31, and further comprising a code
2 segment that causes the output devices to communicate the content to an audience.
- 1 33. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the content
2 communication is by way of a visual display.

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1 34. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the content
2 communication is by way of electronic broadcast.

1 35. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the content
2 communication is by way of audio/visual broadcast.

1 36. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the content
2 communication is by way of audio/visual display.

1 37. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the input frequency
2 preference relates to a weight of each content relative to other content and wherein
3 the processing of input preferences includes a code segment for assigning a weight
4 to the schedule data associated with the content, whereby in response to the
5 schedule data the output devices are caused communicate the content preferentially
6 according to the assigned weight.

1 38. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the input interval
2 preference relates to a recurring period associated with communication of the
3 content, and wherein the processing of input preferences includes:
4 assigning a recurring period to the schedule data associated with the content,
5 whereby in response to the schedule data the output devices cause the content to be
6 communicated at the beginning of the recurring period.

1 39. A computer program as recited in claim 38, wherein the input preferences
2 relating to the interval include an offset which delays communication of the content
3 following the beginning of the recurring period.

1 40. A computer program as recited in claim ____, wherein the input time of play
2 preference relates to a time of day, and wherein the processing of input preferences
3 includes:
4 assigning a particular time of day to the schedule data associated with each
5 content, whereby in response to the schedule data, the output devices cause the
6 content to be communicated at the particular time of day.

1 41. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the trigger events
2 preference relates to the occurrence of an event external to the algorithm, and
3 wherein the processing of input preferences includes:
4 assigning an external event to be recognized to the schedule data associated
5 with the content, whereby in response to the schedule data the output devices
6 communicate the content upon occurrence of the external event.

1 42. A computer program as recited in claim 41, wherein the external event
2 includes an asynchronous request.

1 43. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the content includes a tag
2 associated therewith, the tag indicating whether or not the content is available for a
3 communication.

1 44. A computer program as recited in claim 43, wherein the tag indicates whether
2 or not the content is available for communication to an audience in a specified
3 venue.

1 45. A computer program as recited in claim 43, wherein the tag indicates whether
2 or not the content is available for [communication to an audience during a specified
3 period of time.